revered Mataji Nirmala Devi working for India to make it a leading nation in the world; and

(c) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) to (c) There is no proposal under Government's consideration to confer the award of 'Bharat Ratna' on Mataji Nirmala Devi.

Killing of an old Man by Travel Agents in Delhi

822. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item appearing in the Hindustan Times, dated 16th November, 1999 about a sixty year old man being threashed to death by half a dozen travel agents in Cannaught Place;

(b) if so, Government reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken by Government against travel agencies, which promise to send people out of the country, in return for huge amounts of money?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The reported incident took place on 13th November, 1999 and a case was registered on the same day at Connaught Place Police Station in which two of the accused persons were arrested and placed in judicial custody. Non-bailable warrants against the other accused persons have also been obtained from the Court.

(c) As and when complaints of cognizable offences by travel agents/agencies are received, criminal cases are registered by the police and investigated to ensure that the guilty, if any, are brought to book.

Circulation of Fake Currency in North-East

823. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been large scale circulation of fake currency notes in the country's North-East region, believed to be handi work of Pakistan's ISI and suspected to have found its way to the RBI;

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(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government to deal with the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I. D. SWAMI): (a) Fake currency notes have been seized by the concerned authorities in the North-East States. However, it is yet to be established whether Pakistan has counterfeited a large amount of fake Indian currency notes.

(b) Available information pertaining to the year 1999 (upto September, 1999) is given in the enclosed statement. (*see* below).

(c) The Reserve Bank of India issues press releases, from time to time, to enable the public to distinguish between genuine and fake currency notes. In order to combat counterfeiting, currency notes are now printed with additional security features. The Central Bureau of Investigation has created a Special Unit for exclusive investigation of counterfeit currency notes. The Border Security Force has alerted its forward troops to be more vigilant so as to ensure that such currency notes are not smuggled into the country.

Statement

Seized notes during 1999 (upto September)

States	No. of Notes	Denomination	No. of Accused
Assam	2	500	One (Indian)
	1	500	One (Indian)
	14	500	Two (Indian)
Manipur	81	500	One (Indian)
	1	500	One (Indian)
	180	500	Two (Indian)
Tripura	1	500	One (Indian)
Arunachal Pradesh	44	500	—
Mizoram	1	500	One (Indian)
	149	100	—
	211	500	One (Indian)
	16	100	One (Indian)
	1	500	Two (Indian)
	18	100	—

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